CONTENT WARNINGS

*Bugs

*Decomposition

BERT

Hello, everybody, and welcome to another very special episode of The Underwood Collection. As this is a live recording, I still have to do the legal read, so here we go: The Underwood Collection is a derivative, non-canonical, fan-made podcast derived from The Magnus Archives, an original horror podcast which is created and distributed by Rusty Quill Ltd. The Underwood Collection is not endorsed by Rusty Quill and is distributed under a Creative Commons, attribution, non-commercial sharealike 4.0 international license. For more information about the original source material, visit www.RustyQuill.com/TheMagnusArchives. Whew! I can—do that.

CONNOR

(Simult.) It's a tongue-twister.

BERT

It is a bit of a tongue-twister. I would also like to apologize to all of our fans for how long the Q&A has been; in our defense, there have been multiple

apocalypses! We have been dealing with— and this is just the people on this call— tornados, hurricanes, fires, evacuations, uh, pandemic, bureaucracy, and *[sucks teeth]*—

ZEPHYR

College.

BERT

School, yeah! That's the one I forgot.

[all laugh.]

CONNOR

All separate apocalypses in their own ways.

BERT

Yeah, no, the fires are still ongoing, the light outside my bedroom is a glorious golden color, and the sun is still red, so, yay, I love living in California. Uh, but, hi! I'm Bert— just gonna go down the line and introduce everybody— I'm a producer, writer, and the voice of Mirror for The Underwood Collection. And, we also have the wonderfully, amazingly talented Connor—

CONNOR

Okay, hello, I'm Connor, I am, as always, your voice of Ulysses, and then in addition to that, I'm technically the head of Pitch Library, and I am an audio editor, as well as a writer.

BERT

Yeah, and we also have the very special guest of Zeph!

ZEPHYR

Yeah, hello! I am Zephyr, or you might know me as Luna Zephyr, anyways— I am a writer for The Underwood Collection and also the actress—actor? *(muttered) gender*— I'm the voice actor for Adriene.

BERT

Again, if you guys ask any questions that are uh, too close to what we want to answer, you will have Morse code added by yours truly, as I also do the Morse code for the Tumblr ARG— I'm just saying that because there's still people who seem to not know that that exists so I'm just going to pimp that at any opportunity I get. And we got a lot of questions! Again, that's partially because we had everything open for so long—

CONNOR

(Simult.) Due to a variety of apocalypses. Bear with us everyone.

BERT

Yeah, the subheading for this Q&A could honestly be “Delayed to apocalypse.”

CONNOR

[Laughs] Alright, so yeah, we’ve had a lot of questions for this season, which was fantastic and due to the fact that our form was open for Apocalypse Time. And Bert will be going through and reading the questions off, Zeph and I and Bert themself will answer, and...we all ready, guys?

BERT

Yeah!

ZEPHYR

Yep.

CONNOR

Go for it.

BERT

Alright. So, absolxguardian said:

"Is Ulysses named after Ulysses from Ulysses Dies at Dawn, the Mechs' album? *(paraphrasing)* They know it's a mythology name, and there's obviously the TMA connection, and they're both non-binary. And it's a bit exceptional that in Ulysses Dies at Dawn, they're the only one using their Roman name, while everyone else has their Greek name." So, Ulysses named after UDAD?

CONNOR

Uh, no, but also the answer isn't *not* no, either. I didn't name them after Ulysses from Ulysses Dies at Dawn. I— My first name starts with a "U." I was frantically trying not to name the character after myself, I barged into a conversation with a friend, said, "Give me a name that starts with a 'U!'" The friend is Jaime, voice of Morgan and on the administrative team, they said, "Ulysses!" I said, "Well, thank God, it's not my name," and that's how we got to that.

ZEPHYR

[snickers]

BERT

And Jaime—

CONNOR

(Simult.) Jaime was thinking of Ulysses Dies at Dawn. I was not. So, kind of. Not on purpose.

BERT

(Simult.) So, yes, but also no.

CONNOR

Yeah. *[Laughs]* It depends on who you ask.

BERT

Yeah. Yes, but also no. Uh, stellarfoam asked about writing a podfic, and going from various institutes, and stopping around in the American institute worldbuilding. As it's a podfic, as long as you're not posting it on Spotify or Google Play, you can do whatever you want. It would count as a TMA fanfic, really, technically speaking, but go ham! Have fun. That's how we started with this, we were just like "Hey, what if we did 'X?'" And that's what we did.

CONNOR

(Simult.) Yeah, any of our worldbuilding lore that comes up in The Underwood Collection is fanlore, it is 100% able to be used, go nuts.

BERT

Have fun. If you use anything that's Rusty Quill's, it's still fanfic so you should be good. As long as you're not posting it anywhere, you're in the clear. And by posting it anywhere, I mean other than fan websites.

CONNOR

Yeah. Just, you know, sharing air streams is where things get complicated and stuff.

BERT

Yeah. zhuzhed asked, "what was the most fun episode to make?" Uh, and I think we all have some interesting answers for that. Connor, what was your favorite episode to make for season two?

CONNOR

Uh, you already know the answer to this one, 'cause it was my answer for what I was looking most forward to— 2.10. That was killer, I loved writing the script for that, I loved getting the raw files for that, editing that down, really all of that was just good, good fun and something I was very much looking forward to for a long time. Just the culmination of that and I was very proud of how it turned out.

BERT

And that’s my daaaad, it’s my dad! Boogie-woogie-woogie. For those of you who are not aware, Frank Prosper is voiced by my father, Robert Rotzler, who was very excited to get to do anything with his child, especially for the podcast thing. Also, he’s probably going to listen to this, so hi, Dad! It’s good to see you again.

CONNOR

[laughs] If you’re wondering whether it was intentional that one of our writer and administrative workers’ father was the guy who shows up in the season two finale— no, it was not intentional, it just happens like this.

BERT

After season one we were like, “Wait, we need an actual adult voice for Frank” and everyone went, “Who has a parent— who knows an adult voice actor who’s chill?” And I went, “Oh, yeah, my dad used to do radio work,” so—

CONNOR

(Simult.) Sometimes, when you are a young adult creative, the only older people in your vicinity— and by older, I mean over 25, which is not old, but you know what I mean— are your parents. And you just roll with that.

BERT

Doesn't help that pandemic also made it so that our options for older voice actors shrank significantly.

CONNOR

That's very true.

ZEPHYR

You say that like we had other options.

CONNOR

We could've!

BERT

(Simult.) We technically could've, but I had a quick fix and everyone was like, "Oh, okay." And it turned out magnificent. For me, I got to edit the entirety of "Ghost Light," and that was a lot of fun because I got to do all the hyper-specific tweaks that I wanted to do for Mirror's Distortion voice, and

the inevitable appearance of Frank Prosper, and I also got to do the soundscape for "Hell House," which leads us into one of my favorite questions that a whole bunch of people asked, which is "Favorite foley?" And for mine, it is a very specific piece of soundscaping that we used for "Hell House." It is— and I'm going to quote the title of the file exactly— a mouse eating a prawn cracker in a Chinese restaurant.

ZEPHYR

(laughing) I love that.

CONNOR

(Simult.) Yeah, that checks.

BERT

Yeah, that was an amazing little— I was looking for a very specific mouse/rat scrunchy sound and all of them sounded like the little cartoon "*nenenene*" and it's like "This—this is unusable." And then I just— thirty seconds of a mouse crunching on a prawn cracker! And it's just— it's perfect, exactly what I needed. If you can just miss the giggling at the end, and it's only three seconds of giggling, it's perfect. Connor, what about you?

CONNOR

Yeah, I'm gonna go for a way less specific answer but— any file that just has the words "Weird [blank]," because a lot of people on Freesound will just throw out some strange audio mixing that they're just having fun with— so I've got a lot of files on my computer that are just "weird pulsing noise," "weird dark droning sound," like— just anything that is like somewhere to the left of what is, you know, normal and acceptable, and is just providing these strange, eerie things that really help in the soundscape, just to get all of those dimensions, whether it's a high-pitched whine or just the really bass-y notes, so that's what I enjoy. You should see what I'm doing with my hands, I'm making all sorts of movements.

BERT

Yeah, Freesound is simultaneously a beautiful website where you're going to find exactly what you're actually looking for and also a terrifying labyrinth where you're going to slog through two hundred versions of a cartoon *"boing-yoing-yoing!"* sound while you're looking for something that is decidedly not that.

CONNOR

Yes, Freesound…there's a statement to be found there.

BERT

Yeah, there's— listen, I like Spiral statements for a reason. I look at anything and I go, "Could make a Spiral statement out of that!"

ZEPHYR

[laughs] John Mulaney voice: Could be a statement!

BERT

Yeah, exactly. So, we got a question from Cecil, who wanted to know if there is an official Discord for The Underwood Collection or Pitch Library! Uh, and we're gonna answer that question before the second one— and the answer to that is a deep, strong, resounding "No."

ZEPHYR

(Simult.) [snickers] No.

BERT

And part of that is I already do moderation work for a fairly small server of under two hundred people, and that's— they're all sane, rational human beings who don't talk all of the time and that's enough work for five people— we don't have the manpower for a server that would be moderated in any capacity.

CONNOR

We are in no place to do an official, moderated, properly taken care of Discord server. We don't have the people for that, we don't have the timezones for that, we quite frankly do not have the resources for that. We are seventeen people working on this project, putting it all together, we would need quite a few people to do our due diligence and moderate it properly, and we cannot do that.

BERT

That being said, if you want to make a fan server, go ahead, have fun, make it— the server that I moderate started as a TMA fan server, and it's actually where The Underwood Collection was born in the first place, so go ahead! Make your own server, but we are not going to make an official one just because we value our sanity, and we just don't have the energy. Cecil also had the question if we have any other podcasts that we're producing, and the answer is not yet.

CONNOR

(Simult.) Not yet.

ZEPHYR

(Simult.) I wish.

BERT

We have ideas, but we sadly do not have the time.

CONNOR

Also, the apocalypse, like I said—

BERT

(Simult.) Yeah, no, the apocalypse has put a damper on the plans that we did have.

CONNOR

Yeah, in addition to the fact that we are all busy, we have had the apocalypse making some difficulties in the speed of our other podcasts.

ZEPHYR

Podcasting is hard! Especially during the apocalypse, so— it's incredibly difficult. And I don't do *near* as much work as the admin team does, so I can't imagine what it would be like trying to make a podcast during this time, on top of another one. Like, that's just insane.

CONNOR

It takes more than enough admin work to run this one podcast and yes, we would like to do things in the future, same with the Discord question, we simply do not have the manpower to do that for the time.

BERT

Thank you. For the writing team, we have a couple questions, which—

ZEPHYR

(Simult.) Oh, that's me!

BERT

That's you! — which can be boiled down to and this is from anons: "Favorite entities?" "Favorite statements?" "Least favorite entity?" and "The hardest part of writing?" You can just pick one.

ZEPHYR

(Simult.) Okay, um— favorite— Okay, so I'll start off with favorite entities. I personally really enjoy writing the Spiral—

BERT

(Simult.) Same hat!

ZEPHYR

Yeah, things like the Dark— it's really interesting to me why people say the Dark is so hard, because it is! But there's also just so much unexplored territory there and it's really fun for me trying to, you know, explore that. Least favorite entity would be the Slaughter, because I have written too many Slaughter statements— least favorite entity's definitely the Slaughter because it's very hard to write a war story that isn't the same regurgitated, "War is bad" kind of thing? I— Oh, I also really enjoy writing the Flesh. Because gore is fun.

CONNOR AND BERT

(Simult.) Yes, you do. Yes, you do.

ZEPHYR

Gore is just so much fun to write and I deeply, deeply enjoy doing it. It's so much fun.

BERT

Connor, what about you? What's your favorite entity to write?

CONNOR

Oh, God, I— well, my favorite entity is, just in general, the Beholding, because I like to know stuff.

BERT

At your own detriment.

CONNOR

At my own detriment, I have said that, in a not fun way, the Beholding is the entity that would corrupt me as a person. If I could just know everything, I would go ham. The Dark is one of my favorites to write because people think it’s boring—

ZEPHYR

And it’s not!

CONNOR

Yeah, exactly, so I like to take it as a challenge, which has led to some very interesting concepts. I also really enjoy the Corruption, which was something I wasn’t expecting, because I guess there were a lot of things where I would sort of instinctively shy away from it at first? And then when I realized what was happening in my own repulsion of the concept, then that

made me go “Ooh! There’s things I can write about here.” And so just using my own inherent hatred, it produces things where I go, “Oh! That’s quite good, actually.” So I enjoy that a lot. My least favorite...probably the Flesh, I’m sorry, I don’t—it’s just—

ZEPHYR

(Simult.) Coward.

BERT

Zeph, you take all the Flesh statements for a reason, sit down.

ZEPHYR

I just— they’re fun.

CONNOR

(Simult.) I just— the Flesh— it’s just distasteful. I don’t know, I...it certainly floats other people’s boats, but I am not among the boats.

BERT

For me, my favorite— as you may have heard me say earlier— I love, love, love the Spiral. Partially because I don’t like writing prose, I prefer writing poetry, and I can just be weird when I’m writing the Spiral statements in a

way that I can't be weird when writing, you know, a normal statement. So I get to twist my words and have fun with the enunciation and the alliteration and what I'm saying, whereas with other statements, it's like, "Oh, God, I have to be normal. I have to proofread this more than twice!"

ZEPHYR

(Simult.) [laughs]

BERT

I also love the Desolation, which is weird because in real life, I hate the Desolation!

CONNOR

(Simult.) That's a good one.

BERT

And, I mean, California is of the Desolation, we are experiencing five hundred fires right now, and I'm so [MORSE CODE SOUNDS] tired— I'm gonna bleep that but I'm gonna leave that sentence is as is— probably least favorite, hands-down is— not hands-down, actually. I've got to think about it. Probably— in theory, I hate the Lonely the most. In practice with writing, it's a tie between the Flesh and the End, partially because I am very

extremely not afraid of death, and that makes End statements, where the horror is death, really hard to write, actually. Like "Well, it's not that scary we're all going to die, who cares?"

ZEPHYR

(simult.) Mhm.

BERT

And it's like "No, someone cares." But there's no horror in it for me, so I don't—

CONNOR

I am definitely the someone who cares *[laughs]*.

BERT

Yeah, I know. Okay, so we have this wonderful question from Jillian, that was wondering why Connor— why Ulysses has a UK accent, but you don't. This actually has a really fun answer, so…

CONNOR

This has a fun answer, which is: I like to be unknowable.

EVERYONE

[Laughs]

BERT

The other fun answer?

CONNOR

Uh—what is the other fun answer?

BERT

That you grew up abroad and you just ate all the accents.

CONNOR

That's— yeah. So my voice is very complicated, which is— My first language is German, my second language is English, but I grew up in a place that was having British English television and family friends from essentially all over the world, so I picked up a habit of not having an accent, or not keeping an accent. So when I started this, I decided Ulysses could be English because it would be a good tie-in to TMA and just making that universe more available to us? And I thought it would be fun. That was genuinely—there's a little bit of story and a little bit of me going ham, so…*[laughs]* yeah.

BERT

We have a question from Kay, that wonders what our characters' designs look like, and if anyone has their own specific design or if everyone is just headcanons galore.

CONNOR

We do have unified designs, you can see that in the official art on the Twitter, but as this is a podcast, literally anyone can put any design to the voices as they please. The things that would be— encouraged, I suppose because I cannot stop you from doing what you want— is to abide by canon descriptions. For example, it's mentioned in episode 2.2 that Ulysses is Black—

BERT

And disabled.

CONNOR

—And disabled, so, you know, don't get rid of that. Once again, aside from that, go ham. I— go nuts, it's your art, you know? That's that.

BERT

Yeah. We have a question from Tia, who is wondering why we decided to make The Underwood Collection's main entity the Dark. Because the cat is out of the bag now, people are no longer assuming it's just Beholding.

CONNOR

(simult.) Cause it's fun.

ZEPHYR

(simult.) Because it's fun.

CONNOR

Because it's fun! Because you don't expect it, and because people said it was boring, so once again, that's a challenge. I will be taking it as a challenge and having a lot of fun with it.

ZEPHYR

Spite is a wonderful motivator.

BERT

(Laughing) It really is.

CONNOR

(simult.) Yeah, I feel like you're learning so much about me.

BERT

Tia also wanted to know how Ever was doing and if she was good, are they alright, we haven't heard from them in a while, so…

CONNOR

[laughs] I— they're probably fine. Don't worry about that.

ZEPHYR

(simult.) [laughs] Probably. It'll be wonderful.

CONNOR

Yeah, if you're worried about Ever, uh, just— don't.

BERT

Write some fanfic!

CONNOR

Yeah!

ZEPHYR

Yeah, please do!

CONNOR

Have fun with that, but don't worry about her. I think—there's no reason to do that. Sorry, I'm just messing with literally everyone listening to this right now. Go on, Bert.

BERT

Yeah, it's gonna be so much fun to edit this, because I'm gonna have to decide what we can keep. Lynnette has a question about if there were any statement ideas that we kind of had to scrap because they didn't fit, so yeah...any—any statement ideas that we wanted to write for the podcast but couldn't manage to work into it.

ZEPHYR

(simult.) Well for me, I write statements as a practice sort of thing, so there are quite a few that I've written that aren't ever going to be in the podcast, just because they weren't organized that way— which is a shame, because I actually do quite like some of them— but yeah, there's a few that you're just probably never going to hear.

CONNOR

The Dark Archives.

BERT

[Laughs] The Dark Archives— wait, we *are* The Dark Archives!

CONNOR

That's true, that's— *Darker* Archives.

ZEPHYR

I'm not saying that we have to do bonus episodes, I'm just saying, if it ever becomes a possibility, we have material that we could use.

BERT

We have so much material.

CONNOR

And we appreciate it.

BERT

Yeah, we do appreciate having so many talented writers who are doing the equivalent of throwing spaghetti at the wall, but also having every single noodle stick, and us realizing we can't actually use all of the noodles.

CONNOR

That is true, I— we just, unfortunately— again, I keep saying this— but we don't have the manpower to make everybody's lovely extra statements into the podcast just because we can't do it. We're too small, and don't have the time, unfortunately, we would love to—

ZEPHYR

(simult.) And legally can't make any money from it, so—

CONNOR

Yes, there's that too.

BERT

(simult.) Yeah. Yeah, no— I have a couple statements that I've written, that I wrote before I realized that we had a spreadsheet for who was writing what and what was going in the episodes for various reasons and what entities we needed and it's— we actually have it very well planned out, and most of our statements are already fully written, so there are episodes that are on the cutting room floor, unfortunately. Uh, "Nestor Bell I'm care you—" I appreciate that—

CONNOR

(simult.) Aww.

BERT

—has the question: If we could chill with any of the Rusty Quill crew, who would it be, and why? So first, I'm prefacing this with: *parasocial relationships! [claps inbetween words]* don't do it!

CONNOR

Yeah, parasocial relationships—

ZEPHYR

Please…

BERT

That being said, I got to very briefly hang out with Jonny at Death to the Mechanisms and boy, that was pure chaos! He named my octokitten "Michael," and then when all of our friends pointed out that they called he would name it "Michael," he named it "Inkbastard" and threw it at me, and so— I would like to have more chaos hours with Jonny, especially because I've been watching his streams lately, and he's— he's a very good time and also I adore Sasha, so I'd like to spend time with them, too.

CONNOR

I— God, all of my answers are so boring. I just— I feel like everybody is being very interesting and I am just a guy sitting at my desk, because, like Bert said, parasocial relationships are a whole thing so I would probably try and talk to someone who I actually know, and have interacted with in the past, so my answer to this would probably be Alex and Hannah, because they're great! Appreciate them a lot and the work that they do with us and just that we are very lucky to have a good professional working relationship with them.

BERT

Yeah.

ZEPHYR

I have the utmost respect for Alex and Hannah and what they do, like— we just all appreciate them so much.

CONNOR

Yeah, it's a lot of hard work and I would love to not be talking about work with them. That's a really nice experience to have. So that's my answer.

BERT

I really feel like we couldn't say 'chill' because we have a working relationship with some of these people.

ZEPHYR

Well, for me, for a lot of the Rusty Quill crew, I just deeply respect and admire their views on narratives and stories and I just think it would be really fascinating to have conversations about that with them. And there's so many crew members who have such interesting ideas about such things that it's honestly really hard for me to choose, but I guess— If you held a gun to my head and made me pick two people— I guess either Jonny or Ben.

CONNOR

Nice.

BERT

(simult.) Nice. Uh, so someone had the question—one person wanted to know—Tom, Tom wanted to know about the "hell house" and the descriptions of that, and someone wanted to know about the banana— what was the reference about that— and the lighter fluid, and how that happened to you— and that would be Square...So Connor, could you please explain the banana and the lighter fluid?

CONNOR

Yeah, so the “hell house” is a very real experience, minus *some* of the eldritch terror that I had during a program— a residential program last summer. So, everybody’s names have been changed when I decided to make it into a horror story, so no, you can’t find any of my classmates. Yes, there was a fire, there were multiple fires— yes, there was a particular bonfire where we were given lighter fluid and quite a bit of rotten fruit— snack fruit that would go bad by the end of the day in a single day was not made up, that all happened. It sucked, to the point where we had boxes upon boxes of rotten fruit, which we burned, because that is what teenagers in dormitories do...It was one of the nastiest things that I have seen in my life.

BERT

And you have pictures.

CONNOR

I do have pictures of it! It’s just this oozing, nasty fruit flesh—

BERT

(simult.) I can’t believe I’m saying this, but the statement does not do the images justice for how bad it was.

CONNOR

(laughing) It— yeah, it was deeply nasty, and I just had to include it because it was so weird and it was so— it was one of those things that you cannot make up. So, yes, it was a real experience, most of it, and there was a lot of stuff I didn't include! Like the washing machine catching on fire, or the toaster causing an evacuation—

BERT

(simult.) [laughing]

ZEPHYR

(Simult.) I remember that…

CONNOR

Oh, and I didn't include the gas leak—

ZEPHYR

The spiders…

CONNOR

The spiders!

BERT

Wasn’t there also like, a brief prank thing with mannequins in masks? I seem to remember—

CONNOR

Yeah!

BERT

Connor live-blogged this at us via Discord while this was happening—

ZEPHYR

Yeah, it was truly horrifying to hear.

BERT

And all of us were like, “Hey, Connor, are you okay?” And Connor’s like, “I’m fine. When I survive this, I'm going to the Magnus Archives and I’m *giving a [MORSE CODE SOUNDS] statement!”* It— it was bad.

CONNOR

Yeah, it was very bad, I don’t think I slept the entire time. I was taking like eight milligrams of melatonin every night.

BERT

It was very bad.

CONNOR

Yeah, it was an interesting time— and ultimately rewarding experience, but a weird place! Very weird.

BERT

Percy has the question: “What kind of hobbies do the Underwood staff have outside of work?” And a question we’ll perhaps be able to get a bit more in-depth in because Zeph is here: “Adriene appears to be an avatar of the Dark—” appears— “is this known by Jonah/Elias or any other leaders of the Institutes?”

ZEPHYR

Hmm, I guess— all I can say— all I can really say on the Adriene front is: Adriene, despite, you know, statements from her daughter, is very good at concealing truth, because— due to her nature— and is also very good at manipulation. So, you know, “Who’s to say, really?” is my answer.

CONNOR

Who’s to say?

ZEPHYR

As far as hobbies go, I think she’s into crocheting!

CONNOR

I was literally about to say Ulysses crochets.

ZEPHYR

(simult.) Ah!

CONNOR

I feel like that’d be a ridiculous thing for them to have in common, so I’m just gonna keep my answer.

ZEPHYR

Excellent. Wonderful.

BERT

Amazing. As we know, Morgan is a fan of journaling, and —this is entirely due to Square doing art of it— Mars plays Cookie Run, obviously. We keep seeing art of it and it’s become like an in-company agreement—

CONNOR

(simult.) Joke, yeah.

ZEPHYR

(simult.) Yeah, definitely!

BERT

Where it’s like, “Yeah, Mars only plays Cookie Run.”

ZEPHYR

(simult.) It’s so funny to me too because I like, religiously play that game.

BERT

I know you do.

CONNOR

I have never heard of Cookie Run—

ZEPHYR

(simult.) It’s fun, it’s cute.

CONNOR

You know, another thing that I take from art is that Ulysses likes stargazing, cause I think that fits.

BERT

Aww. And you know, I love the headcanon that Cass does Warrior Cats fanart? But I'd have to ask Tal if they liked it, because Tal voices Cass, and technically Cass is Tal's character, and I would not feel comfortable imposing the Warrior Cat headcanon directly onto Cass, but— Cass has some niche interests, I will say that.

CONNOR

Mhm.

BERT

And my character is Mirror and— Mirror's hobby is screwing around with people misplacing files and just generally being a poltergeist. If they can make somebody's day a little bit harder, that's what they're doing. That being said, they don't screw with Morgan. They know better than to screw with Morgan. We have a question about the canary noise, sorry, that is off-limits.

CONNOR

Yeah, the canary noise, the answer to that one: guess. Have fun with that one.

BERT

Yeah the answer to that is: guess. There's a question from— I'm not reading this person's name because Adriene Blake was voiced by a minor—

ZEPHYR

At the time! I'm not a minor anymore.

BERT

So you're okay with me saying the name of this question asker is "Adriene Blake please step on me?"

ZEPHYR

(laughing) Yeah, that's fine. I just— I'm not a minor anymore, it's fine.

BERT

(simult.) Okay, just making sure. Alright, which is the question of: "What is the relationship between—"

CONNOR

Read out the question.

BERT

I am reading out the question! Which is “What is the relationship between Jonah/Elias and Adriene? Are they friends?”

BERT

Beep-beep-beep-beep-beep— no. Can’t answer that one. Sorry.

ZEPHYR

(simult.) (cackling)

CONNOR

Who’s to say?

BERT

Who’s to say? No, no, that would be telling.

ZEPHYR

(simult.) Who’s to say?

BERT

Anna wants to know if there were any parts of the podcast where we had to do a bunch of takes?

CONNOR

(simult.) Yes, all.

BERT

Boy, howdy, Anna, you're gonna love this season's bloopers because it has a section of Connor saying "No, didn't like that," basically every time Connor has said that, which, when we first got the blooper reel, it was set to music and I hope we can do that again.

CONNOR

Yes, I'm a very poor reader, so any of the episodes— just a quick peek into the creative process here— any of the episodes that you get that are about twenty minutes long will take me an hour to read aloud.

BERT

Bare minimum.

CONNOR

Bare minimum. And I just send it off to our poor raw audio editors and I attach a note that says, “I’m very sorry for this.”

BERT

And then they laugh at us. And then they laugh at you afterwards.

CONNOR

Yes [*laughs*]. And honestly, due to the nature of the fact that we are so spread out, we are essentially Franken-voicing everything together— we have to do a lot of takes. We have to get a lot of different dialogue takes because there isn’t any live feeding off of each other, so— inflection and how things are coming across can be very different depending on, you know, how it interacts with the other person, who you aren’t hearing say the dialogue that’s happening with you. So we, by principle, will have a lot of takes for one scene, and then as I mostly compile the dialogue, I’ll put them together and use those takes to find the one that sounds the most natural, that sounds like a conversation.

BERT

Yeah.

ZEPHYR

Yeah. I know for me, it's mainly just me doing a take, and then Connor says, "Can you do that just a little bit more smug?" And so I do it again. And Connor says, "Just a bit more smug, please." So I do it again. And Connor goes, "Just a little bit more smug," and— there's a point where I don't know how much more of an absolute [MORSE CODE SOUNDS] I can be—

CONNOR

(simult.) [laughing]

BERT

And then I send it back like, "Hey Zeph, could you do it again, but clearly?" And Zeph is just throwing away the phone and resigning.

ZEPHYR

I really don't mind doing it because, I mean, Adriene doesn't have that big of a role, so I'm not doing that much work, quite frankly.

CONNOR

Yeah, going off of what Zeph said, actually, it's a process that we do have where actors will send in their original takes, I will take a listen or Bert will take a listen and then give direction and send it back. So really, doing a lot of takes is not just "Is there any part of the podcast where that has to

happen?” — which is an understandable question, but it’s a really integral part of how we make it and how we collaborate and use the medium of being completely remote, which is more and more common because— apocalypse— but really showing you that it’s possible, you can do it, if you’re sitting here thinking, “Should I make a podcast?” Yes, you should! It’s feasible and it’s a part of the creative process.

BERT

We have a question from Beck, which is: “What is the Underwood Collection’s stance on dogs?”

CONNOR

Yes.

BERT

Which is like, “No dogs in the archive,” “No dogs on the moon,” et cetera, et cetera. I’m gonna be real: I think everyone in the curatorial staff is a cat person.

CONNOR

I mean, yeah, but we don’t dislike dogs.

ZEPHYR

I’m just saying, if Adriene finds a single dog in her archive, it’s going to be a problem.

BERT

Oh, yes.

CONNOR

Ulysses would just be confused and concerned.

ZEPHYR

[laughs]

BERT

So just to keep track: Ulysses would be confused, Adriene would be pissed, and Mirror is the one who let it in in the first place.

CONNOR

Yeah. Yeah.

ZEPHYR

Yeah!

[all laugh]

BERT

Cool, alright. Sarah had a question about the idea/inspiration for Mirror; so Mirror's first statement is episode two, season one: "Reflection." And we had a bit of a— I want to say a plot hole-related— where it was like "Oh, we need like a neutral party to do X and to do Y and who can be obviously hidden and et cetera, et cetera." And Connor looked at me dead in the eye and was like, "Hey, you'd have a good voice. You have a good character idea, what are you going to do?" And I was like, "Well, if I could be a Spiral character—" And then from the rest it was kind of history?

CONNOR

(simult.) Yeah, yep. Yeah, I— it was— we had a very specific opening for a very specific character and a very specific— like—

BERT

Sound?

CONNOR

Yeah, sound, and also we happened to have that statement which we hadn't put follow-up in until we realized, "Hey! This is exactly something that we can fit, looking to fit—" and once again, tie it back in. So it was really cool.

BERT

I love Mirror, I hope we get to see more of them. I love voicing them, and I absolutely technically stole the role because I was like, "Hey, wait, I can do sound effects," and then I did the sound effects and Connor was like, "Oh, I guess you're them."

CONNOR

(laughing) Yeah. I first heard the sound effects and I was like, "Just keep doing the part. We've got it. It's all good."

BERT

Rowan actually had a question— can we answer Rowan's question first? Because it's—it's a quick one and we kind of skipped it and it's important.

CONNOR

(simult.) Yeah. Go ahead.

BERT

Rowan was wondering about what processes are involved in sound design for the episodes. So it kind of depends on who's doing sound design? If it's Connor, Connor will pick one of the premade soundscapes with some exception and fiddle with it, change the audio cues, add audio bits of spooky sounds here and there and sprinkle it in and then smooth it over til it gets a mirror sheen. If I'm doing it, I don't start with a pre-made soundscape, I get all of the weird sounds in one place and then I make my own soundscape from scratch.

CONNOR

Yeah, no, the only thing that is pre-made is if I include music, which is one of the things I do that you do not, but aside from that we both will gather...

BERT

Yeah, I just— when I'm doing it, I want the creeping dread audio behind the words to fit what the statement is and what's being said, and how it's being said, so I'll put peaks and valleys where there's quiet moments, or moments of high tension and like— I have some weird audio effects that I've used for the episodes I've soundscapes, like one of them— and I'm not telling you which— has simultaneously volcanoes, thunder and a sub-human hearing frequency that headphones can play.

CONNOR

Yeah, I like a lot of tactical sounds. I like feeling as if you could just turn around and all of a sudden, you're in the parking lot or you're hearing the dog go for a walk— so what I really like to do is find small accent notes that will just kind of bring the world around with you wherever you're listening? I like to include music because that is something that personally— I just like the atmosphere of it, that it brings. But aside from that, I really enjoy sounds that it almost feels like you can touch— like if you have your eyes closed, this would be—

BERT

The word you're looking for, Connor, is "environmental atmospheric audio."

CONNOR

Yes, that is it. I— thank you.

BERT

You're welcome.

CONNOR

But yes, that is absolutely how I approach it. Rather than let it be too existential, I suppose I like to ground in the moment.

BERT

We have a cute question from Lina, which is: “Between Ulysses, Cassian, Morgan and Mars, who’s oldest to youngest?” And I’m gonna throw Adriene in there because Adriene just wins oldest.

CONNOR

So, adding Adriene in there, she is the oldest, Ulysses is the second oldest, then Morgan, then Mars, then Cass.

BERT

There was also a second question from Lina which is wondering about the ants that burrowed into Ulysses’ hands, and what happened to them, because the only ants that you described are the ones that come out of Ulysses’ legs.

CONNOR

This has a horrible, nasty answer, but I will give my genuine thought process which is: Ulysses was actively using their hands and didn’t have pain in them, which was not a “Oh, whatever, I think that their hands should be fine.” But the fact that— my logic was, you have got more shin bones and leg bones than you have got bones in your hands. So, for something that is

trying to create a colony inside of a person, where in real life they are going to be burrowing through dirt, and creating tunnels inside of dirt, the biggest equivalent to that is going to be the thickest like— the bones that have the most surface area. So the reason—

BERT

I have— I have a biology reason too.

CONNOR

Yeah, and obviously, ants aren't gonna live in your legs, but eldritch ants are gonna—

ZEPHYR

(*simult*.) Unless you're Nestor.

CONNOR

I meant like in real life. But yeah, eldritch ants can move through your body and find what is nicer for destroying your bones 'cause the little phalanges are not good for creating a colony. That's the horror reason.

BERT

(simult.) I'm about to ruin Connor's answer— The potentially pseudo-biology reason is you actually have veins in your arms that are wide enough for ants to go through?

CONNOR

Oh, I love that.

ZEPHYR

(delighted)(simult.) Oh, I love that...Oh, that's wonderful!

BERT

Especially eldritch ants— And they lead to your heart, which leads to anywhere in your body, so technically speaking, just because they entered in through the hands, doesn't mean they stayed there. In fact, path of least resistance— especially if they're going through veins as opposed to arteries— would be to the legs and to the feet.

CONNOR

I love that.

ZEPHYR

(simult.) Oh, boy!

BERT

And your hips, your femurs and your feet all have the most spongy marrow in them as far as bones go, because they're under so much pressure all of the time? So it's actually the most ideal place for ants to set up a colony, which is why if you're say, looking at the decomposing remains of a coyote, not that I have experience with that, you're going to be seeing the ants first setting up camp in the hips, going lower, and then once they've completely evacuated most of the flesh from the legs, they're gonna go to the skull.

CONNOR

I love that! So Lina, your answer—

ZEPHYR

(simult.) Wonderful!

BERT

(*simult*.) At which point you're gonna be a full avatar, I guess.

CONNOR

Yeah, your answer is: The ants that burrowed into Ulysses hands, didn't leave the hands because they went into their heart, and from there walked on down to the legs—

BERT

(singing) The ants go marching one by one, hurrah, hurrah!

CONNOR

(*laughing*) Yes, that is exactly what I was thinking of!

BERT

That’s copyright-free, I can keep that in!

CONNOR

So, yeah, that’s your answer, I hope we all learned something today.

BERT

I’m sorry that I do so much vulture culture— embalming—

CONNOR

We’re gonna have to put a content warning on this.

BERT

Oh, yeah… Just FYI, I do some stuff with naturally found animal corpses? So I have a lot of experience with decomposing skeleton matter. In fact, I have the aforementioned coyote skull on my desk, right here— it's beautiful.

CONNOR

Ok.

ZEPHYR

One of the things I love about Bert is that they just— they just have a little bit of experience in *everything*. So they just know everything.

BERT

(simult). I do!

[*All laugh.*]

BERT

Square had the question of: "If any of the characters had tattoos, and if so, what?" Yeah.

CONNOR

Yeah, Ulysses definitely has tattoos. I like to think that they got quite a few during their twenties and were smart enough to get them not on their forearms and places that would be difficult to cover up. So that is why they tend to wear shirts that at least go to the elbow— what are they? What are the tattoos? I don't know, they just exist, so go nuts.

BERT

Not bugs.

CONNOR

Not bugs. They're absolutely not bugs. There's probably like some vines thrown in there somewhere.

ZEPHYR

I like to think that Adriene would have a few. But not in places that you could see, you know?

CONNOR

I like to think that Adriene would— God, this is so cheesy— would have at like, the base of her neck, a very small eye, in the back of her head. Cause I like that idea. I like it as a very small and intentional "eff you" to the Eye.

ZEPHYR

Yeah.

CONNOR

Don’t think I can say that, but small and intentional—

BERT

You can say “eff you.”

CONNOR

Aw, yes! Okay.

BERT

I personally think that if Adriene were to have a tattoo, it would be— One, it would be hidden, and another thing— because of the whole thing with the Church of the Divine Host and all that, like— I wanna say it’s probably a variation of the tarot for either the Tower, the Moon, or the Three of Swords on the torso, and it’s done extremely traditionally. Because Adriene has class and taste and also for that reason might not have any tattoos because— just because.

CONNOR

Yeah, I just feel like Mars definitely has tattoos, and—

BERT

They’re visible. They are visible.

CONNOR

Yeah.

BERT

It’s probably something silly like— not silly but one of those really cool pop art tattoos? And the final question we have, from an anonymous user: “Do you know how cool you and your podcast are?” And they already gave us the answer which is, “Very super cool!”

CONNOR

Oh, wow.

ZEPHYR

(simult.) Aww.

BERT

Thank you, anon.

CONNOR

That was a Q and an A. Thank you!

BERT

That was a Q and an A. Thank you so much, anon. We need to wrap this up for a whole bunch of reasons, so— thank you guys for the questions! Season 3 is going to be, like this Q&A, slightly delayed due to apocalypse— we are working on it, we do have quite a bit of pre-production done. That being said, it's still a lot of work.

CONNOR

And just like season 2 was more ambitious than season 1, season three will hopefully take a bit above and beyond, so we're very excited to share it with you, and that will be happening, slightly delayed due to the apocalypse. So bear with us, keep yourselves safe, keep your families safe, wear a mask—

BERT

Wear a mask!

ZEPHYR

(simult.) For the love of God, wear a mask!

BERT

Don’t do parties with explosives, please, I’m begging you!

ZEPHYR

Please.

CONNOR

To anybody who is working right now: I’m sorry, thank you, keep yourself safe and take care of yourself when you’re listening to this, after you’re listening to this, you know, do all the good stuff. Drink water, have a nice meal. I don’t know. But just— we understand how tiring this is and that everybody’s going through this together so we hope we can provide a good next season for you, and thank you so much for listening.

BERT

Alright, that’s it! Again, this has been Bert—

CONNOR

Connor—

ZEPHYR

—And Zeph.

BERT

And we wanna thank you guys for sticking around with us during this whole Q&A, for sending in your questions— we truly love and appreciate you guys— Again, we're still kind of shocked that we got as many questions as we did, that we got enough questions to actually do a Q&A—

CONNOR

The response to this is always overwhelmingly positive and we cannot say thank you enough.

BERT

(simult.) Shocking! Alright, and I think that's it!

Bye!

OUTRO

The Underwood Collection is a podcast produced and distributed by the Pitch Library Creative Team. Find us on Twitter @PitchLibrary, on Tumblr at www.pitchlibrary.tumblr.com, or contact us by sending an email to usherfoundation@gmail.com. The Underwood Theme was written by

Theodore Goodwin, and the Underwood logo was created by Maebe. Thank you for listening.